

21 Speeches P.S.

EXTRACT OF SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE HONOURABLE THE PRIME MINISTER  
J.B. VORSTER, AT THE ANNUAL BALL OF THE HELLENIC COMMUNITY OF  
PRETORIA, HELD ON THE 19TH NOVEMBER, 1975, TAKEN FROM THE TAPE  
RECORDING OF MR. P. STATHOULIS.

Your Excellency, my Kollega Dr. Koornhof, Edelaagbare Burgermeesters,  
Meneer die President, Hoogwaardigheidsbeksleërs van die Helleense  
Gemeenskap, Kiries Ke Kirie. Ek se graag namens my vrou en myself,  
baie dankie vir die vriendelike verwelkoming by hierdie geleentheid.  
Ek se by uitstek dankie vir die vriendelike woorde wat u aan my address  
gerig het. Ek se in die besonder dankie aan u vir hierdie besondere  
aandenking wat u aan my by hierdie geleentheid oorhandig het. Ek is  
diep geraak deur die historiese waarde daarvan, ek is diep geraak  
deur die simboliek wat daarin te vinde is. Ek se ook graag namens  
my vrou baie dankie, vir dit wat u by hierdie geleentheid aan haar  
oorhandig het.

If it wasn't for the fact, Ladies and Gentlemen, that I have a very  
firm arrangement with your esteemed Ambassador that he will always  
speak Afrikaans on Wednesdays and I will always speak Greek on  
Thursdays. If it wasn't for that very firm arrangement, Ladies and  
Gentlemen, I would have addressed you further in Greek. But as he  
rightly pointed out there are certain rules which must be observed  
at all times and which cannot be transgressed at any time, it is for  
that reason, that I withhold myself from doing this step. Mind you,  
I also feel sorry for you if this would have been Thursday - but let  
me say immediately that I have been called many things in public life,  
but I have never been called a spoil-sport and I know that you have  
come here tonight, not to listen to tedious and long speeches, you  
have come here as you regularly do, at the end of every year, to  
celebrate to enjoy yourselves and I suppose it is for that reason  
that the tables are rather far apart. But I can give you the assurance  
that, as far as I am concerned, I will very definitely not inflict a  
speech upon you, because, van der Merwe said many years ago, that there  
is a time to speak and there is very definitely a time not to speak.  
Van der Merwe once fell down a very deep borehole, shouted to high  
heaven until somebody heard him. The person who heard him called for  
help and they shouted down to him and said "Van der Merwe, we will put  
a rope down to you and you must tie the rope around your body and we  
will pull you up". He shouted back "Unfortunately, I can't do that

because I have broken both my arms", so they said to him, "well van der Merwe, you van der Merwe's come from Niewerus and you are very well known for your very strong teeth, so bite onto the rope and we will pull you up by your teeth". He did so and they pulled him up, and just as his head appeared above the surface one of the bystanders said to him "Gee van der Merwe but you have in fact got strong teeth" and he said - "Yes".

Now as for myself, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is very true that it has been a long year, an exceptionally long year as far as I am concerned and I am still convinced that this year has had fourteen months instead of twelve. Therefore, I want to say to you candidly that the reason why I came here tonight was because of the fact that not only have I been pleasantly associated with the Hellenic Community over the years but, because I hold the Hellenic Community in very high regard - and I want to agree with everything that was said a moment ago by my friend on the right there. As far as I am concerned, you heard me say that in the past - I have dedicated myself so far as it is humanely possible to create an atmosphere in this Country so that better relationships can spring up between peoples and peoples. I have dedicated myself to bring people together, create better understanding, not only between people in this Country but as between South Africa and other Countries in Africa and elsewhere.

I thank you Sir, for saying that these efforts have been crowned with a measure of success. I am on record saying a number of years back, that I have never doubted in my mind that the time will come when people will come to this Country, not only to enjoy the sunshine that nature has provided so abundantly in South Africa, not only to come to enjoy the good things that this Country has to offer to the tourist and for the business visitor. Sure as we are gathered here tonight, a time will come when people will come to South Africa - to come and experience at first hand - to come and find out how in this world that we all live in it is possible for people of different languages, different outlook, different religions, different colours, different traditions, different cultures - how it is possible that such people, on the one hand maintaining their identities holding dear that which belongs to them, on the other hand how it is possible that such people can live together in a certain geographical area in peace and in harmony.



We are a small Country compared to the population of the world - we are a small people but I have no doubt in my mind that God in His Grace has also given to small peoples to contribute great ideas to the world's ideas. The people, how small it might be, can, with a bit of hard work, clean living and honesty of purpose, give an example to the rest of the world which is indeed worth following.

I say to you that we in South Africa the South Africa our adopted Fatherland or otherwise, we, have it in us, to contribute such an idea, that the ideas of the world to set such an example. In spite of what they say about us, naturally the more ignorant they are about South Africa - the more they have to say about South Africa.

I thank you therefore, for this opportunity that you have given me and my wife, again after so many years that we are associated with you in this way, to take this opportunity to wish the Hellenic Community everything of the best for the future - to wish you, God's richest blessings in the approaching Christmas and to wish you all a very prosperous and good year - 1976. With those words, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is not necessary for me to express the wish that you will enjoy the rest of the evening - I know you too well to know that you will do just that - and thank you very much again for inviting us here and thank you very much Mr. President for being so kind as to excuse us if we have to leave you now. I thank you.

SPEECH BY P. STATHOULIS, CHAIRMAN OF THE FEDERATION OF HELLENIC COMMUNITIES OF THE TRANSVAAL, DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION OF THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HONOURABLE MR. J. VORSTER'S ATTENDANCE AT THE PRETORIA HELLENIC COMMUNITY'S ANNUAL BALL

Sy Edele die Eerste Minister van die Republiek van Suid Afrika  
Mnr. John Vorster, Mev. Vorster, Sy Edele die Minister Dr. Mulder,  
Mev. Mulder, Sy Edele die Minister Dr. Koornhof, Mev. Koornhof,  
His Excellency the Ambassador for Greece Mr. Kerkinos, Mrs. Kerkinos,  
Mnr. die Burgermeester van Pretoria Raadslid Coetzee, Mev. Coetzee,  
Mnr. die Burgermeester van Verwoerdburg Raadslid Theron, Mev. Theron,  
Your Grace Most Reverend Archbishop Paul Lyngris, the Consul General  
for Greece Mr. Helmis, Mrs. Helmis, our Host President of the Hellenic  
Community of Pretoria and Mrs. Calinikos, eeregaste, Ladies and  
Gentlemen.

Meneer die Eerste Minister u is reeds verwelkom namens almal van ons  
hier deur die Voorsitter van die Griekse Gemeenskap van Pretoria,  
Meneer John Calinikos ons gasheer, maar vergun my, Edelaagbare, om by  
te voeg dat Hellenisme inderdaad vereer is met u teenwoordigheid  
hier vanaand. Woorde kan kwalik die groot eer en voorreg wat u ons  
bewys, beskryf. Ons is Meneer die Eerste Minister, opreg dankbaar  
dat u dit goedvind om u te assosieer met nog 'n klein maar dinamiese  
sektor van u Suid Afrikaanse bevolking.

Ons die Hellene van die Republiek, nieteenstaande georganiseerde  
gemeentes dwarsdeur die land, het nie 'n aparte eiland van mense  
binne die Republiek tot stand gebring nie, trouens, ons vorm met  
trots 'n integrale en verantwoordelike sektor van die Suid Afrikaanse  
nasie soos weerspieël in die boodskap van Sy Edele die Minister  
Dr. Koornhof.

We have been allowed, even encouraged, by the very nature and principle  
of freedom afforded to the South African people to retain our Christian  
principles, ideals, culture and heritage and yet, on the other hand, we  
partake as fully pledged South Africans of undisputed loyalty, in our  
Country's everyday affairs.

The South African of Greek descent has made his mark in South Africa in the various walks of life. The Greek immigrant who has made South Africa his newly adopted homeland, quickly becomes assimilated and also forms an integral part of this wonderful nation. We assure you Sir, that we South Africans of Greek descent make it our duty and responsibility to guide and ensure that these immigrants become worthy South Africans to be integrated in this wonderful South African nation - which is today envied by the whole world.

Your presence here this evening Mr. Prime Minister, together with all our other distinguished and honoured guests, endorses and confirms this factor that we are not people who have isolated themselves but that we form an integral part of South Africa.

Ἐξοχώτατε,

Τό ὅτι βρῖσκεστε ἀπόψε μαζί μας ἀποδεικνύει τή στοργή τῆς κυβερνήσεώς σας πρός ἐμᾶς τούς ἑλληνικῆς καταγωγῆς Νότιο-Ἀφρικανούς καί τούς Ἑλλήνες νεομετανάστες. Αὐτό καί μόνο εἶναι ἀρκετή ἀπόδειξη τοῦ ὅτι εἴμαστε εὐπρόσδεκτοι σέ τούτη τήν ἑξοχή χώρα ἡ ὁποία πολλά προσφέρει σέ μᾶς καί τίς οἰκογένειές μας.

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We know Sir, that you would never want anyone of your people to relinquish their Christian principles, culture and heritage but on the contrary you encourage us to retain and use these for the benefit of our Country, South Africa.

Ἀγαπητοί συμπατριῶτες,

Θεωρῶ μεγάλη τιμή τό ὅτι βρῖσκομαι σ' αὐτήν τήν θέση κι' ἐκ μέρους τῆς Ὁμοσπονδίας τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν Κοινοτήτων TRANSVAAL θέλω νά σᾶς τονίσω ὅτι εἶναι σπουδαιοτάτης σημασίας τό νά ἀνήκομε στίς διάφορες Ἑλληνικές Κοινότητες καί νά φροντίζωμε γιά τήν πρόοδό τους διότι χωρὶς ἀμφιβολία παίζουν σπουδαῖο καί ζωτικό ρόλο σ' ὅλους τούς τομεῖς τῆς Νότιο-ἀφρικανικῆς κοινωνίας.

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Die geskiedenis van die Helleense nasie getuig van 'n diepe waardering vir vrede en vryheid ten alle tye - vandaar dat die Hellene baie maklik aanpasbaar is in die Republiek as gevolg van die feit dat die Suid Afrikaner ook vryheid en vrede aanmoedig en respekteer, - U onlangse pogings en die sukses daarmee behaal op die internasionale front, is genoegsame bewys van hierdie stelling.

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Your career Sir, as leader of our Country has been crowned with success and progress. No sooner had you become Prime Minister than you honoured the Hellenes of South Africa with your presence at the Wanderers Club in Johannesburg. You had only just then taken the reign to lead our Country to its destiny.

We South Africans have all followed your achievements with pride - your success on the international front - an arena which today is extremely difficult to partake in - has been marvelled.

We feel Sir, that because of this success, we wish to associate you with some of our Greek mythology. We do this proudly and in an honourable and sincere manner Mr. Prime Minister.

The ancient city of Athens had as its symbol the owl - the sacred bird of the Goddess Athena - the Patron of wisdom, art, science and the protector of the city of Athens - to the ancient Athenians this was the symbol of strategic victory and wisdom - we would like Sir, as offspring from that nation that left its mark in the world in many spheres, to give you this evening from the Federation of the Hellenic Communities of the Transvaal, a replica of this sacred bird of the Goddess Athena - because you have Sir, with the guidance of the Allmighty, portrayed wisdom and achieved strategic victory in the affairs of South Africa as our leader - therefore Sir, please accept this work which was created by the renowned Greek master craftsman Elias Lalaounis - a work made of semi-precious stones and solid silver.

Thank you.